

FORM B – BUILDING

Assessor's Number USGS Quad Area(s) Form Number

07-544

Orleans

N

EAS.325

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Town/City: EASTHAM

Place: (*neighborhood or village*):
Campground Road Area

Photograph



Address: 17 Gile Road

Historic Name: Samuel F. Brackett House, Bay Breeze

Uses: Present: Single Family Dwelling House

Original: Single Family Dwelling House

Date of Construction: ca. 1930

Source: Title research, Eastham Tax Commitment
Books, Assessor records

Style/Form: Craftsman

Architect/Builder: Unknown

Exterior Material:

Foundation: Concrete

Wall/Trim: Wood shingles/ Wood

Roof: Asphalt shingles

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:
None

Major Alterations (*with dates*):
None

Condition: Good

Moved: no ☒ yes ☐ **Date:**

Acreage: 0.17 acres

Setting: This property is located on a small parcel on the south side of Gile Road. The surrounding area includes early-20th century cottage lots, and the area is now built out with modest cottages and houses from the early-20th to the early-21st centuries. This house is set close to the street. A sand driveway leads to an attached garage. The parcel is informally landscaped with dune shrubbery.

Locus Map



Recorded by: Eric Dray, Preservation Consultant, for

Organization: Eastham Historical Commission

Date (*month / year*): April 2025

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

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☐ Recommended for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

If checked, you must attach a completed National Register Criteria Statement form.

Use as much space as necessary to complete the following entries, allowing text to flow onto additional continuation sheets.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION:

Describe architectural features. Evaluate the characteristics of this building in terms of other buildings within the community.

This is a modest example of a raised one-story Craftsman cottage with an exposed basement level. The house is oriented to the west towards the bay. The building rests in a concrete foundation, which suggests that the original foundation was replaced. It is possible that not all of the basement level was built the way it is now, or perhaps the cottage was raised at a later date. The elevations are clad in weathered wood shingles with plain cornerboards. The gable roof has a more steeply pitched core with lower-pitched shed roofs extending east and west. There is a large, enclosed porch under the west roof slope. The roof is clad in asphalt shingles and has slightly projecting open eaves capped by broad fascia boards. Windows have all been replaced and now consist primarily of varying-sized, modern thermal 1/1 double-hung sash with no frames. A narrow, open wood stair leads to a centered entrance on the west side porch. The lower level facing Gile Road includes a one-car garage.

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

Discuss the history of the building. Explain its associations with local (or state) history. Include uses of the building, and the role(s) the owners/occupants played within the community.

Incorporated as Nauset Plantation in 1646, and changed to Eastham in 1651, Eastham territory originally extended south to Pleasant Bay in Orleans and north beyond Wellfleet Harbor. The early development pattern for what we now know as Eastham was impacted by its absence of deep-water harbor facilities. Relatively fertile soil led to dispersed agricultural settlement, but residential and commercial development was concentrated to the north at Wellfleet Harbor and to the south at Town Cove and Pleasant Bay. When the separate towns of Wellfleet and Orleans were created in the late-18th century, Eastham became and remained one of the least populated towns on the Cape throughout the 19th century.

In the 19th century, Eastham was the agricultural center of the Outer Cape. Crops evolved over time; corn and dairy were surpassed in the early-20th century by asparagus and turnips - two crops well suited for the sandy soil. In 1900, 58% of Eastham's workers were employed as farmers, but by 1930 that number had dwindled to 21%. Summer resort development, including cottage colonies and subdivisions of former farmland that would transform Eastham, had begun in earnest in the 1920s as middle-class access to car ownership increased and Cape roads were improved.

This property is connected to the cottage development around Campground Road - one of the three earliest roads to extend west to Cape Cod Bay from the central sections of Eastham. Despite the early development of the road, which was established to serve the Methodist camp meetings in the mid-19th century, the great majority of houses that border it, especially to the north, are 20th-century vernacular summer cottages and retirement houses.

One of the earliest subdivisions at the west end of Campground Road was registered in 1915 by Robert E. Horton, who was then living in Boston. It was the first of three subdivisions he registered. Horton, whose father Robert R. Horton, had been a grocer, railroad station master, and postmaster in North Eastham, purchased a large parcel abutting the area's first subdivision by Alonzo Higgins. The land Horton bought had belonged to farmers Barnabas K. Mayo and William H. Nickerson in the 19th century. Horton's first subdivision in 1915 laid out sixty-four lots and four roads - the northward extension of Bay Road, Gail's Way, Marion's Way, and Gile Road (Figure 2). In 1925 and 1934 Horton expanded his subdivision to the north.

This cottage was built on portions of Lots 59 and 60 on Robert Horton's 1915 subdivision. In 1923 and 1924, Horton sold Lots 59 and 60, along with other parcels, to Samuel F. Brackett.¹ According to the Eastham tax Commitment Books, Samuel Brackett was

¹ Barnstable Registry of Deeds, Book 401/ Page 110, Book 408/ Page 540.

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assessed for numerous cottages throughout the 1920s, so it is not possible to pinpoint the exact construction date of this cottage. It has an Assessor date of 1930, which may be a good approximation.

Samuel F. Brackett was the son of Elkanah C. Brackett (1809-91) and his second wife Achsah Snow Crosby Smith (1823-1903). Samuel F. Brackett was born in 1864, and by 1880 he and his older brother George B. were doing farm work, but they began to invest in real estate and to build cottages for summer residents by the turn of the century. Samuel F. Brackett was very active in Eastham real estate starting in the 1890s and continuing into the 1940s. Not surprisingly, the early decades consisted primarily of purchases and in the later decades consisted primarily of sales; but by 1943, he lost numerous properties through tax takings.

After Samuel F. Brackett married Anna S. Eldredge of Wellfleet in 1888, the couple moved to the former Scotter Cobb house at 670 Massasoit Road (EAS.80), and in the 1900 census, Brackett was listed as a grocer. This undoubtedly refers to his working at the Cobb-Brackett General Store (580 Massasoit Road, EAS.7), which he would go on to purchase in 1903. Samuel F. Brackett and his wife had one son, Samuel H. Brackett, in 1906. By 1929 Samuel F. had retired from running the store and turned its management over to his son.

In 1941, Brackett sold this parcel, now described as being portions of Lots 59 and 60, together with a cottage known as "Bay Breeze" to Elsie C. M. Farmer of Randolph, MA.² Elsie Hagg (1908-2008) had married Garfield Elliott Farmer, Sr. (1908-1966) in Randolph in 1931. They appear to have had modest means – according to census records he worked as a chauffeur (1930), laborer (1940), and was unemployed as of 1950. Nonetheless, they were able to purchase this cottage in Eastham. In 1972, Elsie Farmer sold this cottage to Eleanor M. Watson and Betty Watson Ray of Arlington, MA.³ The cottage remains in the Watson/Ray family.

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

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www.ancestry.com - Vital records.

² Book 586/ Page 189.

³ Book 1656/ Page 66.

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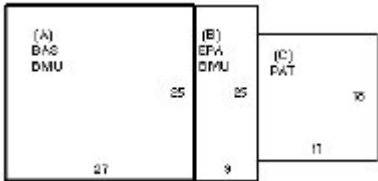


Figure 1. Assessor Sketch.



Photo 2. View looking southwest (2004 Assessor photo).

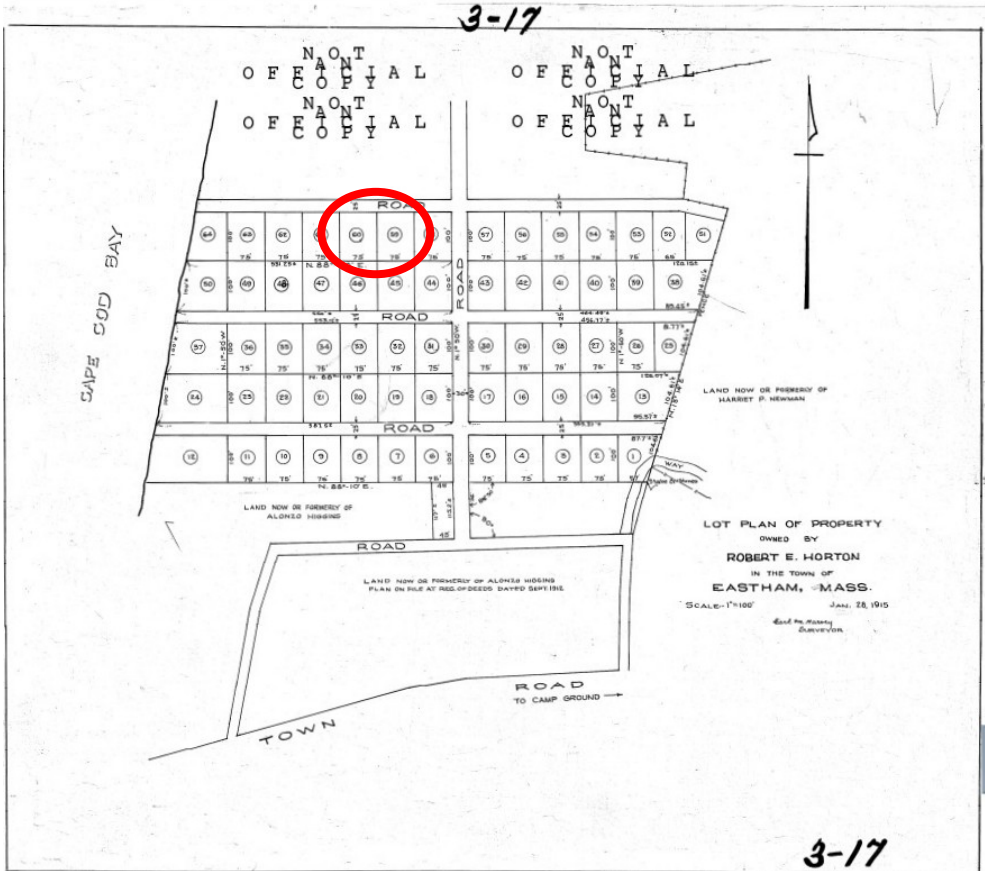


Figure 2. 1915 subdivision plan for Robert E. Horton (circle to Lots 59 and 60 added).